

REMARKS

Claims 1-51 were pending at the time of examination. No claims have been cancelled. Claims 21 and 51 have been amended to correct some minor errors of typographical nature. The line numbering recommended by the Examiner has been added to the claims. The applicants respectfully request reconsideration based on the foregoing amendments and these remarks.

Objections to the Specification

The Examiner objected to the specification on the basis that it contains hyperlinks, which may cause problems with regards to the potential for inclusion of new matter. The applicants respectfully would like to point out that there are no hyperlinks directed to specific Internet sites anywhere in the application (including the drawings), and assume that the Examiner's objection is an inadvertent oversight. Thus, the applicants respectfully request that the objection be removed.

The Examiner also objected to the specification because of the use of various trademarks. The applicants have identified all the occurrences of proper names, and concluded that none of them is used in connection with any specific products. Thus, the proper names not used in a trademark fashion, but are rather used as names of providers of various products, in which case they do not need to have the TM symbol attached to their names. Nevertheless, the suppliers do need to be uniquely identified, and therefore the applicants have amended the specification to add the full names and locations of the companies that are mentioned in the specification.

The applicants believe that the specification is now in allowable form and submit that all the objections to the specification be removed.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-51 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication No. US 2003/0058277 A1 to Bowman-Amuah et al. (hereinafter Bowman). The applicants respectfully traverse the rejection for the following reasons.

The applicants' invention relates to apparatus and methods for provisioning services within a computer network, such that the services can be accessed by other entities or services. More specifically, as can be seen in paragraph [0010] of the applicants' specification, in general, a service manager is configured to manage the provisioning of services between remote entities within a computer network. A remote entity offers a service to another remote entity through the service manager. The service manager facilitates formation of the offer to one or more Invitee(s)

specified by the service provider. After an offer is formed, the offer may be provided to the specified Invitee(s). After an Invitee receives an offer, the Invitee can choose to accept the offer through the service manager or to let the offer expire. The service manager can also track the status of each offer and whether each specified Invitee has accepted the offer. After an Invitee accepts an offer, the service manager can record information sufficient for the Invitee to use the offered service.

Bowman, on the other hand, is directed to a view configurer in a presentation services patterns environment, which assigns a view to a particular activity. A notification is received that a startup event of an activity has occurred. A reference to a first instance of an object created by the startup event of the activity is also received. When the notification and the reference have been received, a view to launch is determined based on predetermined criteria, which may include user preferences, an experience level of a user, security profiles, and/or workflow settings. The view is associated with the activity and displayed. Alternatively, the activity can run without a corresponding view. The activity can operate on a machine separate from a machine of an end user (Bowman, paragraphs [0009]-[0010]).

Turning now to the specific rejections of the claims, the first step of claim 1 recites:

“receiving an offer pertaining to a service, the offer being created by a provider and transmitted from a first device to a second device within the computer network;”

That is, a service provider creates an offer for a service and transmits it over the computer network from a first device to a second device, for example, from a first computer at the service provider to a second computer hosting the service manager. The Examiner rejected this step referring to paragraphs [1790], [0418], [2305], [2294] of Bowman, and added that “wherein the service centric platform is offering services to users.” Paragraph [1790] of Bowman discusses the advantages and disadvantages of an Encina transaction monitor for use in a distributed computing environment (DCE). The above recited step does not recite the use of a transaction monitor or any operations thereof. Paragraph [0418] discusses how to distinguish between client/server technologies and Netcentric technologies, which are both presented as examples of different architecture generations. The above claim limitation does not make any suggestions about Netcentric or client/server technologies, respectively. It merely states that an offer is transmitted from a first device to a second device within a computer network. Paragraph [2305] discusses the way in which business components interact with each other, and makes a distinction between process-centric business components and entity-centric business

components. Process-centric Business Components are described as being "in control," while entity-centric Business Components "do what they're told." According to Bowman, a process-centric Business Component controls the flow of a business process by requesting services in a specific sequence according to specific business rules (i.e., conditional statements). The services being requested are generally offered by entity-centric Business Components, but not always. Sometimes process-centric Business Components trigger other process-centric Business Components. However, the above claim limitation does not mention business components. Neither does it make any statements about what component or entity is "in control" and what component or entity "does what it is told," respectively. It merely states that an offer is sent from one device to another across a computer network. Finally, paragraph [2294] states that a project team

"designs Business Components in more detail, making sure they satisfy the application requirements. The team builds upon its previous work by providing a formal definition for each Business Component, including the services being offered. Another name for these services is 'Business Component Interfaces.' The team also models the interactions between Business Components."

Again, the recited claim limitation does not mention business components. Nor does it mention how a project team designs such business components. The applicants respectfully submit that the paragraphs cited by the Examiner at best only provide a high-level description of four separate topics related to the Bowman system (an Encina transaction monitor, the distinctions between client/server technologies and Netcentric technologies, the interaction between business components, and the process for designing business components). None of the paragraphs cited by the Examiner, alone or in combination, teaches "receiving an offer pertaining to a service" or "the offer being created by a provider and transmitted from a first device to a second device within the computer network," as required by the claim limitation. The added explanation from the Examiner ("wherein the service centric platform is offering services to users") does not provide any further guidance as to how the features described in the cited parts of Bowman would interact to anticipate the first step of claim 1, particularly since none of the cited sections of Bowman mentions a "service centric platform."

The second step of claim 1, recites:

"receiving identifying information regarding one or more invitees to be invited to access the service of the offer, the one or more invitees being transmitted from the first device to the second device;"

The Examiner rejected this step referring to paragraphs [1494], [1475], [1259], [1084] of Bowman, and added that "wherein the various types of authentication types are sent between two nodes." Paragraph [1494] of Bowman is a one-sentence paragraph that reads "National Registry's NRIDentity-fingerprint recognition," which, according to Bowman, is an example of a product that performs authentication. Paragraph [1475] gives a three-line definition of biometric identification, that is, using biological characteristics to verify individuals' identities. Both of the cited paragraphs are example of biometric information. However, the claim limitation does not recite biometric information, but merely recites "identifying information." As stated in the specification, the invitees are often various organizational entities, which cannot be identified through biometric information. Paragraph [1259] discusses the Real-Time Control Protocol (RTCP), and states that "RTCP allows nodes to identify stream participants and communicate about the quality of data delivery." Streaming is a particular type of process for transferring time-sensitive data streams (e.g. video and/or audio) in real-time (see Bowman, paragraph [1255]), and the RTCP is described as one example of an emerging standard for streaming protocols. There is no recitation in claim 1 of streaming or a need to transfer real-time data. Finally, paragraph [1084] states that a directory service "interacts with security services such as authentication and authorization track identities permissions." Claim 1 does not recite any directory services, security services, authentication, authorization, or permissions. That is, the paragraphs cited by the Examiner, at best, suggest that there are biometric identification systems and that there are methods for streaming time-sensitive data audio and video data. The applicants respectfully submit that none of these cited paragraphs, alone or in combination, teach "receiving identifying information regarding one or more invitees to be invited to access the service of the offer" or "the one or more invitees being transmitted from the first device to the second device," as required by the claim limitation. Furthermore, the added explanation from the Examiner ("wherein the various types of authentication types are sent between two nodes.") does not provide any further guidance as to how the biometric identification systems and the streaming described in Bowman would interoperate to anticipate the second step of claim 1, as no video or audio data is streamed in the applicants' invention, biometric information cannot identify invitees that are organizational entities, and no authentication is required by the claim limitation..

The last step of claim 1 recites:

"in response to the receipt of the offer and the identifying information regarding the one or more invitees, providing an invitation to each of the one or more invitees to access the service of the offer based on the received identifying information"

The Examiner rejected this step referring to paragraphs [1293], [1471], [1518], [1467] of Bowman, and added that "wherein the user name and passwords are verified prior to offering the service to the invitees." Paragraph [1293] of Bowman provides a brief description of the Lotus notes platform-independent client/server mail system, which is provided as an example of a major proprietary E-mail server used in a large organization, and states that

"Notes mail can support over 1,500 active users per server, offering Internet integration, distributed replication and synchronization. Lotus Notes also provides integrated document libraries, workflow, calendaring and scheduling, and a cc:Mail user interface."

The applicants acknowledge that, in a very general sense, an email system such as Lotus notes can be used to send out invitations. However, the above recited claim limitation does not recite any email system, and the cited section of Bowman does not anticipate or suggest "providing an invitation to each of the one or more invitees to access the service of the offer based on the received identifying information."

Next, paragraph [1471] states that authentication can occur through ID/Password Encryption, which requires that the user name and password are encrypted during transit between two devices and thereby offers a "somewhat higher level of security." The recited claim limitation does not make any suggestions as to using encryption, but merely states "providing an invitation... based on the received identifying information." Thus, it is not clear to the applicants how paragraph [1417] could anticipate the above recited claim limitation.

Paragraph [1518] states

"(Some transport services do not implement all of the listed functionality. For example, the UDP Protocol does not offer connection control or reliable transfer.)"

The functionality referred to in paragraph [1518] is the functionality of the "Message Transport service" which is responsible for "the end-to-end delivery of messages" (Bowman, paragraph [1512]). The functionality for the messaging transport service listed in paragraphs [1513] through [1517] include end-to-end data transfer, connection control, reliable transfer, flow control, and multiplexing, none of which is mentioned or otherwise suggested in claim 1.

Finally, paragraph [1467] states that "authentication services verify network access requests by validating that users are how they claim to be," and that "authentication mechanisms can be used to verify which functions and data the users have access to." This is a very general

statement, which does not appear to have any particular bearing on the above recited claim limitation. The claim limitation does not recite authentication of any type. It merely states that invitations are provided based on the identifying information, and does not go into any detail about whether the invitee is authorized to receive the invitation. Thus, the applicants respectfully submit that none of these cited paragraphs, alone or in combination, anticipates the third step of claim 1. The added explanation from the Examiner ("wherein the user name and passwords are verified prior to offering the service to the invitees") does not provide any further guidance as to how the features described in the cited parts of Bowman would interact to anticipate the last step of claim 1, particularly since claim 1 does not recite any verification whatsoever. For at least these reasons the rejection of claim 1 is unsupported by the art and should be withdrawn.

Claims 2-18 all depend from claim 1, and are therefore neither anticipated nor obvious for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 1, and the rejections of claims 2-18 should be withdrawn.

Claim 19 is a system claim with limitations similar to the limitations of claim 1, and is therefore neither anticipated nor obvious for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 1, and the rejection of claims 19 should be withdrawn.

Claims 20-33 all depend from claim 19, and are therefore neither anticipated nor obvious for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 19, and the rejections of claims 20-33 should be withdrawn.


Claim 34 is a *Beauregard* claim corresponding to claim 1, and is therefore neither anticipated nor obvious for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 1, and the rejection of claims 34 should be withdrawn.

Claims 35-51 all depend from claim 34, and are therefore neither anticipated nor obvious for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 34, and the rejections of claims 35-51 should be withdrawn.

Conclusion

The applicants believe that all pending claims are allowable and respectfully request a Notice of Allowance for this application from the Examiner. Should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the undersigned can be reached at the telephone number set out below.

Respectfully submitted,
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